

Structured versus Situational Business Negotiation Approaches

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Abstract— Structured versus Situational Negotiation approaches are investigated in the present article. A set of N=571 business negotiations were investigated, divided into two groups: n1 = 265 negotiations from which parties were unprepared, used situational negotiation approaches, n2 = 306 negotiations from which parties planned and mapped the negotiation previously, adopting structured negotiation approaches. Two hypotheses are investigated through an independent-samples T-Test to determine whether the structured negotiation approach is a sound strategy to be pursued. Key findings pointed out a statistical significance on both analyses, meaning that a structured negotiation approach creates more value and achieve better deal values than situational negotiation approaches. Finally, this article provides scholars with a new perspective and taxonomy on the business negotiation approaches, and implications of these findings for managerial practice are discussed.

Keywords— Structured, Situational Negotiation Approaches, Negotiation skills, business management, four-type negotiation matrix, negotiation process.

I. INTRODUCTION

Research on business negotiation activities has attracted scholars' attention as conceptual development has evolved regarding the negotiation strategies pursued by the parties, to reach better mutual agreements. The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of negotiation preparation before value distribution [1]; [46]; [47]; [53]; [55]; [56]; [57-59], and [60].

An experiment with two sets of independent data was conducted and further analyzed. The conclusions provide managers, scholars, practitioners, professors, instructors, business negotiators, among others, with new insights into the negotiation process.

First, a systematic literature review on the subject is presented. The conceptual foundations to the two basic negotiation approaches are discussed: (i) the situational negotiation approach, and the (ii) structured negotiation approach. Based on these constructs, a set of hypotheses were tested by the Independent Samples T-test. Then, the conceptual and managerial implications of the results in the current negotiation knowledge are discussed. Finally, the study limitations are addressed, and suggestions for future research, as well as the scope of potential applications, are disclosed.

II. THEORETICAL RATIONALE ON NEGOTIATION APPROACHES

Negotiation is defined as “a process of communication by which two or more persons seek to advance their individual interests through joint action.” [55] (p. 7). “Negotiation is a process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint decision.” [47] (p. 20). Distributive negotiations, according to Raiffa [53], are defined as “one single issue, such as money, is under contention” (p.33), and integrative negotiation as a “bargaining—in which there are two parties and several issues to be negotiated” (p.131). Therefore, Negotiation strategies are derived regarding the number of issues negotiated. The groundbreaking work of Dias [1], however, included both number of issues and parties in a two-dimensional, four-type negotiation matrix, useful to address all types of negotiations, as depicted in the following Figure 1:



Fig.1: - The Four-Type Negotiation Matrix. Source: Dias, 2020. Reprinted under permission.

Observe in Figure 1 the two-dimensions regarding a more complex negotiation model, which includes all types of negotiations. Such a matrix proved useful for a more detailed analysis of the negotiation dimensions.

Regarding the negotiation strategies, the mutual gains approach addresses value creation before value distribution [57-59]. Besides, two negotiation approaches are investigated, as illustrated in Figure 2, as follows:

Feature	Situational	Structured
Skills	unskilled	skilled
Preparedness	Unprepared	Prepared
Underlying interests of the other party	Narrow	Open
Level of Information	Superficial	Detailed
Value creation	Limited	Expanded
Informational risk	Higher	Lower
Time for preparation	None	Necessary
Contingencies	Unexpected and unanticipated	Expected and Anticipated
Level of self-confidence	Low	High

Fig.2: - Situational versus Structured Negotiation Approaches.

Observe in Figure 2 the characteristics of the two approaches: the structured negotiation approach took 45 minutes for negotiation planning, mapping the ground, and preparation, while the situational negotiation approach took virtually no time for preparation. The negotiators engaged in the process as promptly.

The T-test equations are illustrated in Figure 3, where: N is the sample size, S is the variance, and \bar{x} is the sample mean, as follows:

$$t = \frac{(\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2) - (\mu_1 - \mu_2)}{S_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}} = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{S_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}}$$

$$S_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2} = \sqrt{\frac{(N_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (N_2 - 1)s_2^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2} \left[\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2} \right]}$$

Figure 3: - T-test equations.

The hypothesized relationships are based on the preceding theoretical rationale. A statistical hypothesis test followed an independent-samples T-test, under the null hypothesis, two investigate two separate groups of negotiations: (i) negotiations with no planning or preparation, named situational negotiation approach, and (ii) negotiations with due, systematic planning, mapping, and preparation, termed as structured negotiation approach. To the two mutually exclusive groups, the same negotiation role-play simulations were applied, in $N=571$ business negotiations. The T-test rationale was illustrated in Figure 3. The hypotheses are stated as follows:

H₀: the structured negotiation approaches do not imply in better negotiation deals, mainly the value deals and the number of options for mutual gains created. In sum, negotiation preparation, planning, and mapping before the negotiation have no statistical significance. $H_0 = \mu_{STNA} = \mu_{SINA}$, or $H_0 = \mu_{STNA} - \mu_{SINA} = 0$, where: μ_{STNA} is the mean Structured Negotiation Approach, while μ_{SINA} is the mean Situational Negotiation Approach.

H₁: Structured Negotiation Approaches perform higher deal values than Situational Negotiation Approaches.

H₂: Structured Negotiation Approaches perform a more significant number of options than Situational Negotiation Approaches. In sum, the efficacy of the negotiation preparation skills is put to the test.

Then, methods and materials, as well as the research design, are presented. Next, the managerial and conceptual implications, as well as the contribution to current epistemology in negotiation, are discussed. Finally, future research directions and potential applications are suggested.

III. METHODS AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Data were collected from a random sample of MBA students $N=571$ business negotiations from, as illustrated in Table 1. In total, twelve different cohorts from all Brazilian regions were investigated. To each cohort, the same four sets of two-party role-play simulations were applied (types I, II and III, respectively), as follows:

Table 1
Data set: structured versus situational negotiation approaches

Data set	Cohort	# parties	Negotiations	Agreements	%
n ₁ = situational negotiation approach	1	34	40	38	95%
	2	24	26	23	88%
	3	24	36	34	94%
	4	33	48	47	98%
	5	26	26	22	85%
	6	42	59	56	95%
	7	25	30	30	100%
Total n ₁		208	265	250	94%
n ₂ = structured negotiation approach	8	32	59	52	88%
	9	34	58	52	90%
	10	26	51	49	96%
	11	54	102	98	96%
	12	23	36	36	100%
Total n ₂		169	306	251	82%
Total n _{1 + n₂}		377	571	501	88%

Observe in Table 1 the total of parties involved: 377 parties have negotiated 571 negotiations, with 501 agreements (88 percent). While group n₁ performed 250 agreements out of 265 negotiations (94 percent), the group n₂ totaled 251 agreements out of 306 negotiations (82 percent). The negotiations were held from 15 December 2019 to 7 June 2020.

Out of the 377 participants, 55 percent were male, 45 percent female, 73 percent in the middle to high-level management positions, while 30 percent occupying low-level management positions, from which 95 percent Caucasians, 60 percent married, 40 percent single or divorced; 80 percent is 25-45 years old, 12 percent above 45 years old; 35 percent speak a second language, besides Brazilian Portuguese (mostly English).

Group n₁ participated with no preparedness for the negotiations (situational negotiation approach). As soon as the parties finished reading their roles, the negotiation started. Group n₂, on the other hand, worked with ensured preparedness, through negotiation mapping (see Appendix I for a sample). Group n₂ had approximately one-hour preparation to fulfill the negotiation Map before the negotiation started.

This study used the independent-samples test to analyze the relationship between the hypotheses. The statistical significance attributed to this research encompassed a 95 percent confidence level. Therefore, the p-value is five percent (p=0,05). The negotiation process is also supported by Goffman's dramaturgical theory [48-49]. The negotiation process investigated involves at least two parties [1-10]; [20-31]; [46]; [47]; [53]; [55]; [56]; [57-59], and [60].

In addition to the data displayed in Table 1, other data were gathered when the negotiation was over: (i) the deal value, in BRL, (ii) the number of options created. For this particular, the parties should submit their negotiation maps for further clarification and analysis. Therefore, it was possible to assess the number of options for each negotiation.

Then, the data set was analyzed through SPSS 26. Initially, the variable GROUP was assigned to encompass two positions: "0", for situational negotiation approach, and "1", for a structured negotiation approach (independent variables). DEALVAL (deal value) and OPTIONS (options) are the dependent variables under investigation.

Finally, Group statistics were performed, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, as well as the T-test for Equality of Means. In the next section, the results are displayed and further analyzed and discussed.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 26. The hypotheses H1 and H2 were put to the test (see Figure 7). Group statistics revealed 307 structured negotiation approaches, and 265 situational negotiation approaches. The Structured Negotiation Approach Mean is greater than the Situational Negotiation Approaches, as illustrated in the following Figure 4:

	GROUP	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Error Mean
DEALVAL	STRUCTURED APP	307	789114,9446	994524,38144	56760,50450
	SITUATIONAL APP	265	553019,0425	763884,74444	46925,06683
OPTIONS	STRUCTURED APP	307	1,20	,639	,036
	SITUATIONAL APP	265	1,06	,380	,023

Fig. 4: - Group statistics. Source: SPSS version 26.

Observe in Figure 4 that both means, i.e., the number of options and deal values, are more significant in the Structured Negotiation Approaches' group than in Situational Negotiation Approaches. In conclusion, the subjects who negotiated using Structured Negotiation Approaches performed better than the situational negotiation approaches.

Initially, however, a linear regression analysis was performed to modeling the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, as depicted in Figures 5 and 6, as follows:

Modelo		Soma dos Quadrados	df	Quadrado Médio	Z	Sig.
1	Regressão	2,872	1	2,872	10,040	,002 ^b
	Resíduo	163,030	570	,286		
	Total	165,902	571			

a. Variável Dependente: OPTIONS

b. Preditores: (Constante), GROUP

Fig.5: - Linear Regression analysis. Source: SPSS, version 26

Modelo		Coeficientes não padronizados		Coeficientes padronizados	t	Sig.
		B	Erro Erro	Beta		
1	(Constante)	1,057	,033		32,162	,000
	GROUP	,142	,045	,132	3,169	,002

a. Variável Dependente: OPTIONS

Fig.6: - Linear Regression analysis. Source: SPSS, version 26

The independent samples test result is depicted in the following Figure 7, as follows:

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		Z	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
DEALVAL	Equal Variances Assumed	28,638	,000	3,14	570	,002	236095,902	75056,35375	88675,12	383516,680
	Equal Variances not Assumed			3,20	562,60	,001	236095,902	73645,88765	91441,42	380750,381
OPTIONS	Equal Variances Assumed	57,113	,000	3,16	570	,002	,142	,045	,054	,230
	Equal Variances not Assumed			3,28	509,22	,001	,142	,043	,057	,227

Fig. 7: - Independent Samples Test. Source: SPSS, version 26.

According to the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, as illustrated in Figure 7, observe $p < 0,05$ for DEALVAL and OPTIONS; therefore, equal variances are not assumed.

Regarding the Deal Values from the data sample drawn (DEALVAL), the Independent T-Test evidenced that the group "Structured Negotiation Approach" presented a superior performance in comparison to the group "Situational Negotiation Approach" ($t(562,604) = 3,206$; $p < 0,05$).

Regarding the Number of Options for Value Creation from the data sample drawn (OPTIONS), the Independent T-Test evidenced that the group "Structured Negotiation Approach" presented a superior performance in comparison to the group "Situational Negotiation Approach" ($t(509,225) = 3,282$; $p < 0,05$).

In these data, regarding DEALVAL, the null hypothesis is rejected at the $\alpha = 0,05$ level of significance, because the difference between the Structured Negotiations Approach and the Situational Negotiation Approach is statistically significant ($p = 0,001$), i.e., one in one hundred samples might result by chance. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis of H_1 is statistically significant.

In these data, regarding OPTIONS, the null hypothesis is rejected at the $\alpha = 0,05$ level of significance, because the difference between the Structured Negotiations Approach and the Situational Negotiation Approach is statistically significant ($p = 0,001$), i.e., one in one hundred samples might result by chance. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis of H_2 is statistically significant.

V. DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

The purpose of this research was to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables regarding the structured negotiation approaches validity, using data collected from negotiators participating in executive training sessions on MBA courses dispensed in Brazil. All the parameters estimated are significant, and a scrutiny of the hypothesized relationships in the negotiations provided consistent support on reinforcing the effectiveness of strategies before the negotiation engagement. First, both value deals and the number of options created in the Structured Negotiation Approach were superior to Situational Negotiation Approach. The independent T-Test showed that Negotiation Structured Approach Group's Mean presented the number of options superiors to the Negotiation Situational Approaches' group ($t(10) = -2,512$; $p > 0,05$). The independent T-Test also showed that Negotiation Structured Approach Group's Mean presented the number of deal values superior to the Negotiation Situational Approaches' group ($t(10) = -2,710$; $p > 0,05$).

However, one implication regards the preparation stage: it should be conducted carefully, considering the underlying interests of the other parties across the bargaining table, and not only self-oriented, and random. According to Moore, there are three types of underlying interests: materials, psychological, and procedural [53]. All the interests, therefore, should be carefully and systematically investigated before the negotiation starts. All the parties were questioned before the negotiation process about the virtues and qualities of a successful negotiator. Among others, empathy was on the top list. However, many negotiation maps were delivered with the field "interests, options, and alternatives of the other party" filled in the blank (see Appendix II). Thus, the social desirability bias was detected in some cases, especially after the first round of four negotiations. How can one pose empathy as a golden rule and fails when putting it into practice?

The solution to this puzzling question came in the debriefing session: when their beliefs were confronted with the actual negotiation maps, regarding the blank fields on "interests, alternatives, and options of the other side," without mentioning names or pointing fingers, the participants laughed. However, from the second negotiation map until the last, all fields were fulfilled. Lesson to be learned.

This study evidenced the importance of consistent preparation before negotiation engagement. The H_0 is rejected, and both alternate Hypotheses H_1 and H_2 are statistically significant. Analysis of these results evidenced how vital is the Structured Negotiation Approach to business negotiations.

Implications for managerial practice

The subject under investigation has implications in many fields of managerial business field of study, for instance several industries, such as (i) aerospace and civil aviation [7], [12], [13], [27], [31], [32]; (ii) brewing industry [5], [14]; [22]; (iii) mining industry [35]; (iv) civil works [19]; (v) public transportation [44]; (vi) debt collection negotiations [28],[36], [41]; (vii) vitiviculture industry [33]; streaming video [29], among others.

Negotiation practitioners can benefit from the research findings in countless ways. First, the alternative hypotheses are supported; therefore, negotiation planning through a structured negotiation process leads to fruitful deals compared to situational approaches, i.e., negotiation engagement without ensured preparation. The findings support the importance of negotiation strategizing before value distribution [57-59]. The results also support the findings of Reinhart and Page [54], regarding "each negotiator's assessment of the other party's dependence may affect the amount of influence he or she attempts to exert during the negotiation." (27) These influences became apparent when the negotiation maps were further analyzed (see Appendix II). The implication is that negotiators are invited to be alert on negotiation skills in general and adopt efficient, structured negotiation strategies to maximize mutual gains on both sides of the negotiation table. When the agreement is considered fair by the parties, it tends to endure throughout time.

Finally, the results also substantiate the importance of accurate negotiator perceptions of the other party's underlying interests. Understanding these interests can help one interpret the interests of clients, suppliers, contractors, and other business counterparts.

Study Limitations

This study is also limited to the Brazilian business negotiation scenario. Other scenarios or countries may differ in their results and are not investigated in this research. Also, in an artificial, controlled environment, where the issues at stake are not real, but interpreted, the results may be influenced by the generosity or mutual concessions to preserve the relationship, due to the student's enrollment in MBA courses endures for 18 months in most Brazilian courses. The participants are encouraged to take the role-plays seriously, and most do it.

However, in a competitive scenario, where parties do not trust each other, such strategies may differ. Therefore, distributive strategies of negotiation are recommended for competitive scenarios. Conversely, integrative strategies are most suited for cooperative scenarios [54]. This study is limited to two parties, one or multiple issues negotiation (Types I, II, and III, respectively [1]). The conclusions about the results are limited to the data set available. Other groups may perform differently.

Finally, this research, compared to the previous body of research, has the merit of successfully testing the negotiation performance on two sets of groups: (i) the unprepared versus the (ii) prepared negotiators, comprising data regarding business negotiation scenarios. This article will be useful to scholars, business negotiators, decision-makers, managers, as well as the overall practitioners.

VI. FUTURE RESEARCH

This research addressed the advantages of structured negotiation over situational negotiation approaches, i.e., testing the impact of the negotiation strategies for preparation before engaging in the negotiation process, regarding Types I, II, and III negotiations.

Future research is encouraged to address Negotiations Type IV (multiple parties, multiple issues in additional studies. Also, potential differences between parties regarding competitive business environments should be tested, as well as assess the impact of the negotiation environment on the interchangeability of negotiation types proposed by the four-type negotiation matrix. Finally, future research should investigate the structured negotiation approach in other negotiation scenarios, such as buyer-seller, contract, government, conflict management, and peace negotiations, among others. Also, an accurate study of the external validity of the alternative hypotheses is a suggestion for future research direction.

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APPENDIX I -NEGOTIATION MAP COMPLETE

Mapa de Negociação - Caso Limite Orçamentário - Gabarito

Interesses (José Antônio)	Alternativas (José Antônio)	Opções (José Antônio)	Pessoas-chave
<p>Psicológicos</p> <p>Satisfação pessoal com a obtenção da verba de aumento de 8% para implementar a nova organização aprovada pelo Comitê Executivo e manter a admiração que meu time tem por mim.</p> <p>Materiais</p> <p>Mostrar resultados satisfatórios no aumento da lucratividade e reformulação do departamento de RH da empresa.</p> <p>Processuais</p> <p>Resolver de forma que fique bom DRH, acarretando aumento de produtividade e faturamento de toda a empresa.</p>	<p>Marcar uma reunião diretamente com o CEO, ou o Comitê Executivo e apresentar todos os dados e o projeto completo, mostrando o apoio de outro setor muito importante. (alternativa arriscada)</p>	<p>Proposta de aumento de 8% (mínimo de 7.7%)</p> <p>Attingir as metas no ano seguinte</p> <p>Mostrar que ele aumentará a produtividade e lucratividade como aconteceu com a ABA LTDA.</p> <p>A verba pode ser liberada em etapas, de acordo com o projeto, a fim de reduzir-se os riscos da operação e manter o controle do processo sob a influência e controle diretos do Bruno.</p> <p>Apresentação de projeto detalhado de modificações no DRH</p>	<p>Vice-Presidente de orçamento e finanças – Bruno</p> <p>Vice-Presidente do Departamento de Recursos Humanos – José Antônio</p> <p>Local(is) da Negociação</p> <p>Sede da empresa ou via zoom</p> <p>Critérios usados</p> <p>Recursos viriam do aumento de produtividade da empresa em 3%, para serem realocados como investimento</p>
<p>Interesses (Bruno)</p> <p>Psicológicos</p> <p>Preocupação com a repercussão política negativa a respeito de um aumento suplementar diferenciado para o departamento do José Antônio.</p> <p>Materiais</p> <p>Mantiver todos os setores operacionais com baixo custo, mantendo a lucratividade da empresa.</p> <p>Mantiver os 5% de aumento.</p> <p>Processuais</p> <p>Mantiver o mesmo critério para todos os departamentos da empresa. Conceder aumentos somente em reuniões com o conselho de administração da empresa.</p>	<p>Alternativas (Bruno)</p> <p>Procurar o presidente da empresa para buscar apoio político e não conceder os 8% ao José Antônio (alternativa arriscada)</p> <p>ZOPA (Estimada)</p> <p>Entre 5% e 8% de aumento.</p>	<p>Opções (Bruno)</p> <p>Crescimento anual de investimento de 5% ou menos</p> <p>Reduzir o quadro de funcionários para compensar a verba extra</p> <p>Reorganizar os setores para que pessoas agreguem mais funções aos seus setores</p> <p>Conceder aumento escalonado entre 5% a 8%</p>	<p>Elementos-chave do acordo</p> <p>Meta</p> <p>8% (7.7% mínimo)</p> <p>Métrica</p> <p>Aumentos trimestrais de 1%. Se atingir a meta no primeiro trimestre, avançamos para o segundo, e assim por diante. Em caso de não atingimento da meta no primeiro trimestre e subsequentes, volta-se ao patamar inicial. (opcionalmente, aumentos trimestrais de 1,5%)</p> <p>Prazo</p> <p>1 ano, aumentos de 1% a cada trimestre (opcionalmente, 1 ano, aumentos de 1,5% a cada semestre)</p>

APPENDIX II - NEGOTIATION MAP SAMPLE

Mapa de Negociação

Interesses (meus)	Alternativas (minhas)	Opções (minhas)	Pessoas-chave
Psicológicos 1. ATENDER 2. MELHORAR DESEMPENHO DA EQUIPE.	1. NÃO TEM SAÍDA. TEM QUE AUMENTAR. 2. VOLTAR PARA ANTIGA EMPRESA.	1. OFERECER REDUÇÃO EM OUTROS INSUMOS. 2. TENTAR CONVERSA COM CEO. BUSCAR UMA SOLUÇÃO.	JOSE ANTÔNIO DO ORH E BRUNO ORÇAMENTO Local(is) da Negociação SEDE DA LIMA CASTER E NO SETOR ONDE TEM MAIOR NÚMERO DE FUNCIONÁRIOS.
Materiais REORGANIZAÇÃO DOS PROCESSOS AUMENTO EM PRODUTIVIDADE			Critérios usados
Processuais TREINAMENTO SELEÇÕES DEMISSÃO NOVA CONFIGURAÇÃO DO ESCRITÓRIO			
Interesses (da outra parte)	Alternativas (da outra parte)	Opções (da outra parte)	Acordo entre as partes
Psicológicos AGRADAR O CEO. CONFIANÇA.			Meta AUMENTO DO ORÇAMENTO EM 8% E MÍNIMO 5%.
Materiais 1. ANÁLISE DE DOCUMENTOS DA CONTABILIDADE. 2. RECURSOS. 3.			Métrica PAGAMENTOS DAS NOTAS DO SETOR E RETORNO FINANCEIRO.
Processuais: REUNIÃO COM GESTOR DA ÁREA. 1. 2.	ZOPA (Estimada) 5 a 8%		Prazo 15 DIAS PARA FECHAR E 6 MESES PARA IMPLEMENTAR.

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